



# Frequently Asked Questions about Water Softener Rebates

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## Water Softener Information

July 18, 2014

### **Q: How do I know if I have a salt-using water softener?**

**A:** If you add salt or potassium chloride to your water softener (or contract with a portable exchange service), then you have a salt-using water softener. If you use a service to change out the tank on your water softener on a regular basis, then you have a portable exchange service.

### **Q: What is a portable exchange service and why are you offering a rebate for it?**

**A:** Portable exchange (PE) is a salt-using water softening process that does not discharge salt into the city's sewer system at customers' homes. Instead, the salt is contained within a spent resin tank (or canister), exchanged by a PE company on a regular basis and regenerated at a centralized facility. This saves water for customers and minimizes the amount of salt discharged to the city's sewer system.

### **Q: If I do not have a water softener but would like to purchase one, can I get a rebate?**

**A:** No, the program is a salinity reduction program. If you choose to install a salt-using water softener without a rebate, we encourage you to look for high-efficiency models or use a portable exchange service.

### **Q: Can I get a rebate if I remove my existing water softener and use a non-salt treatment?**

**A:** Yes, if you replace an existing self-regenerating salt-using water softener with a salt-free water conditioner alternative, you may be eligible for the Removal Option. Visit the [Sanitation District of Los Angeles County](#) website to find more information about salt-free alternative treatments.

### **Q: How do I know if my existing salt-using water softener is lower in efficiency?**

**A:** A water softener that uses a time-clock setting to determine when self-regeneration occurs is usually lower in efficiency. If you have a time-clock setting, your water softener typically self-regenerates at the same time of day (e.g. 10 p.m.) every few days. A more efficient, salt-using water softener self-regenerates on demand (demand-initiated).

### **Q: Is there anything I can do to my existing water softener to make it more efficient?**

**A:** You may be able to adjust the settings on your water softener to match the hardness levels of your area. Consult page 6 of Scottsdale's [2014 Water Quality Report](#) ([scottsdaleaz.gov/Water/Quality](http://scottsdaleaz.gov/Water/Quality)) for information about water hardness in your area.

### **Q: If I choose to purchase a salt-using water softener, what qualifies for this rebate program?**

**A:** To qualify for a rebate for the High Efficiency Replacement Option the replacement water softener must be demand-initiated and not time clock-based self-regeneration. Manufacturers vary in language when describing their products. Refer to the packaging or the manufacturer's website for efficiency information. Ultimately, you need to decide what works best for you and your budget. If you elect to use a self-regenerating salt-using water softener, we recommend you choose something with the following specifications:

- Salt-efficient with at least 4,000 grains of hardness removed for each pound of salt used
- Water-efficient with no more than 5 gallons of regeneration water used per 1,000 grains of hardness removed

**Q: How do I dispose of my old water softener?**

**A:** Scottsdale's Solid Waste can collect your old softener during the monthly brush and bulk collection in your neighborhood. Please follow these guidelines:

- Crack or break the canister so it cannot be reused
- Empty all water and as much caked-on salt residue as possible – the weight limit is 60 pounds
- Place items out for collection by 5 a.m. the Monday of the week your area is scheduled for brush collection
- Keep the unit separate from brush and other clippings
- Do not place the water softener on the street or sidewalk

**Q: What if I have additional questions?**

**A:** Please visit [www.scottsdaleaz.gov/water/unsalted](http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/water/unsalted) for updates on salinity and the Water Softener Rebate Program or call 480-312-5650. Contact the Arizona Water Quality Association at 480-947-9850 or visit [www.azwqa.org](http://www.azwqa.org) if you have additional questions about water softening.

## **Rebate Application Information**

**Q: When does the Water Softener Rebate Program begin?**

**A:** Scottsdale's Water Operations Office will accept applications starting at **8 a.m. on Tuesday, July 1, 2014**. **Note:** Please read the Water Softener Rebate Program Description in its entirety before removing and/or replacing water softeners.

**Q: Are purchases made (or contracts signed) prior to July 1, 2014 eligible?**

**A:** No, the program begins at **8 a.m. on Tuesday, July 1, 2014**. All purchases, contracts and removals must occur on or after this date. **Note:** Please read the Water Softener Rebate Program Description in its entirety before removing and/or replacing water softeners.

**Q: What rebates are available for water softeners?**

**A:** This two-year pilot program has three rebates options:

- A one-time \$50 rebate to the first 300 approved applicants each year who replace an existing self-regenerating salt-using water softener with a more efficient demand-based softener
- A one-time \$100 rebate to the first 100 approved applicants each year who remove an existing self-regenerating salt-using water softener and subscribe to a portable exchange service
- A \$250 rebate to the first 200 approved applicants who completely remove a self-regenerating salt-using water softener (\$125 issued initially and \$125 issued after one year)

**Q: I do not receive a utility bill from Scottsdale, but I live in Scottsdale and/or have a Scottsdale mailing address. Can I get a rebate?**

**A:** No, the city offers this program to its sewer customers to reduce demands on the city's sewer system. Households that do not pay sewer fees to Scottsdale are not eligible for a rebate.

**Q: Do I need to have "Sewer Fees" on my Scottsdale utility bill?**

**A:** Yes, Scottsdale utility customers must have "Sewer Fees" listed under "Current Charges" on their monthly utility bills. The city offers water softener rebates to its sewer customers to reduce the amount of salt entering its sewer system.

**Q: What if I did not take photos of my salt-using water softener prior removing it?**

**A:** Application approvals will not occur without the required photos. The photos provide proof of an existing self-regenerating salt-using water softener.

**Q: What should the photos show?**

**A:** Take two (2) photos of your existing self-regenerating salt-using water softener prior to removal showing its connection to your plumbing and another showing its location in your home/garage.

**Q: Do I need an inspection for all three water softener options?**

**A:** No, we only require inspections for the Removal Option. The Removal Option consists of two (2) credits of \$125 each and requires two (2) inspections. A credit will appear on your utility bill within two (2) billing cycles after each inspection.

**Q: Why do I need two inspections for the Removal Option?**

**A:** The goal of the Removal Option is to reduce the amount of salt entering into our sewer system. We conduct two inspections to ensure the self-regenerating salt-using water softener remains removed. The first credit will appear on your utility bill within two (2) billing cycles after your initial inspection. The second credit follows the second inspection.

**Q: Is there a charge for Removal Option inspections?**

**A:** No, there is no charge for this type of inspection.

**Q: Removal Option only: How do I get my inspections?**

**A:** Water Conservation staff will contact you via email to schedule your inspections. The first inspection will take place following initial review of your application. The second inspection will occur approximately one (1) year after the first inspection. Note: It is your responsibility to contact us for your second inspection if you do not receive notification from us after thirteen (13) months following your initial inspection date. Inspections occur during normal business hours.

**Q: Removal Option only: Why is it my responsibility to follow up with the city for my second inspection?**

**A:** The city will use the email address provided on the application to schedule inspections. Messages may be lost (junk mail folder), deleted or contact information may change. To ensure you receive the second installment of your rebate, mark your calendar as a reminder. If you have not heard from the city for your second inspection within thirteen (13) months following your initial inspection date, call 480-312-5650 to request a second inspection.

**Q: What if I live in a homeowners association and do not pay my own utility bill?**

**A:** If you belong to a homeowners association (HOA) and do not pay your own utility bill, include the name of the HOA's management company (if applicable), contact name, and phone number of the person responsible for paying the water bill on the application. We will provide the HOA with the documentation needed so the HOA can reimburse you after the credit appears on the utility bill. **Note:** The city cannot guarantee reimbursement from the HOA.

**Q: What happens if I no longer pay the utility account, but replaced a salt-using water softener prior to the new owner/renter becoming the active person on the account? How can I get the rebate?**

**A:** We will apply the rebate credit to the active utility account for the property. If you rent or sell the property, your option is to work with the person currently paying the utility bill to see if he/she will reimburse you and allow an inspection, if needed. Rebate credits are account number specific and non-transferable to other property accounts.

**Q: If I purchase a more efficient water softener, can I hire someone to install it?**

**A:** Yes, you can hire someone to install your new water softener. Be sure to request a dated receipt that lists the make and model of the new water softener.

**Q: If I purchase a more efficient water softener, does it have to be from a particular store?**

**A:** No, you can buy it from any retailer (including online). Make sure the invoice/receipt is dated and lists the type of water softener purchased. Original receipts from major home improvement stores with stock-keeping units (SKU) or universal product codes (UPC) are acceptable for proof of purchase.

**Q: If I contract with a portable exchange service, should I use a particular service?**

**A:** No, you can choose the service that works best for you and your budget.

**Q: What if I just heard about the Water Softener Rebate Program and funds are no longer available?**

**A:** While we made every effort to publicize the rebates to utility customers, we acknowledge that some customers may not receive the notifications. The program funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until exhausted. Applications will be time- and date-stamped upon receipt at the Water Operations Office.

**Note:** This is a pilot program and periodic updates may occur as the program progresses.